Chattahoochee River



Georgia





The Chattahoochee River starts high in the Southern Appalachian Mountains in the Mark Trail Wilderness Area. Seeping from a patch of sand and gravel, the river travels down the steep mountainside, growing quickly, fed by many springs and small tributaries. The river passes through scenic mountain villages, past farms, factories, and subdivisions and into Lake Lanier. After dropping 197 feet, the river emerges at the base of Buford Dam to begin its 48 mile journey as the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area under the stewardship of the National Park Service. The beautiful river and the land along it have a rich history dating back for centuries. The word Chattahoochee is Native American and is thought to mean "River of Painted Rocks." The Cherokee referred to the Chattahoochee River Corridor as the Enchanted Land. This guide is designed to help you discover the enchantment.





Historic Settles

Bridge

(closed)

Wading In

Rivers serve as a natural barrier to human travel. Shallow areas in rivers are called fords, and serve as ideal locations for crossing the river. The fords on the Chattahoochee River have been important for centuries and connected an extensive network of American Indian footpaths used for trade. These footpaths resulted in the establishment of the Sixes Trail, Hightower Trail, and others through the river valley.

river. Ferries used the river current to move the boat across the river. A rope was stretched across the river with bow and stern lines attached to it which could be set at an angle to the current. The current's force and the boat's angle pushed the craft across the water. Until the early years of the twentieth century, ferries were the major means of crossing the river. Many names along the river are derived from these early ferry crossings.

Spanning the River

Just like today, as increased travel resulted in waiting lines for the next ferry, wooden covered bridges began to replace the ferries. One such bridge crossed the river at the city of Roswell before and after the Civil War. Today, only a few lonely stone piers remain of these bridges. More durable narrow bridges of steel were gradually built to replace the decaying wood bridges. Though no longer in use, three of these historic steel truss bridges still span the river; the oldest being Settles Bridge, constructed in the 1880s. Today, modern multilane bridges of steel and concrete stand as a monument to their early engineered predecessors. These serve as a reminder of the transition from fords to ferries to bridges as the need and desire to cross the river increased with the growing population.

American Indians

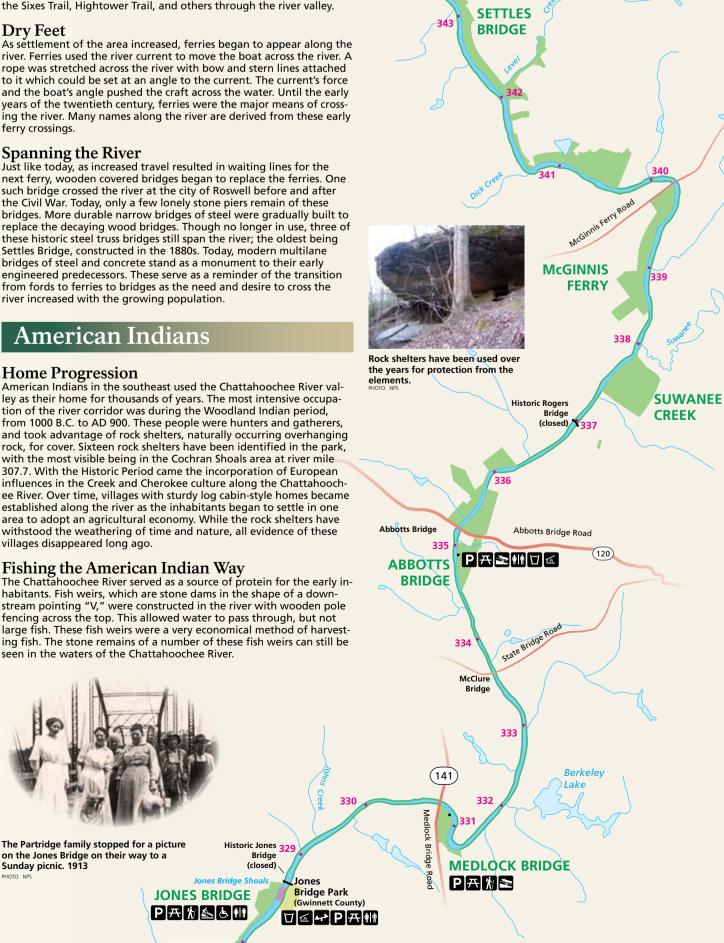
Home Progression

American Indians in the southeast used the Chattahoochee River valley as their home for thousands of years. The most intensive occupation of the river corridor was during the Woodland Indian period, from 1000 B.C. to AD 900. These people were hunters and gatherers, and took advantage of rock shelters, naturally occurring overhanging rock, for cover. Sixteen rock shelters have been identified in the park, with the most visible being in the Cochran Shoals area at river mile 307.7. With the Historic Period came the incorporation of European influences in the Creek and Cherokee culture along the Chattahoochee River. Over time, villages with sturdy log cabin-style homes became established along the river as the inhabitants began to settle in one area to adopt an agricultural economy. While the rock shelters have withstood the weathering of time and nature, all evidence of these villages disappeared long ago.

Fishing the American Indian Way

habitants. Fish weirs, which are stone dams in the shape of a down-stream pointing "V," were constructed in the river with wooden pole fencing across the top. This allowed water to pass through, but not large fish. These fish weirs were a very economical method of harvesting fish. The stone remains of a number of these fish weirs can still be seen in the waters of the Chattahoochee River.

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The Partridge family stopped for a picture on the Jones Bridge on their way to a Sunday picnic. 1913

River Guide

River Safety

The river emerges at the base of Buford Dam from the bottom of Lake Lanier. This cold bottom water poses a potential hazard to all river users. In the event of a spill, you are advised to get out of the water or help others out of the water as quickly as possible, as hypothermia can set in. In and below Bull Sluice Lake and Morgan Falls Dam, the water warms considerably, though caution is still advised. Contact the Corps of Engineers at 770-945-1466 to know dam release times when water levels will rise rapidly.

U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons between Buford Dam and the Hwy 20 Bridge. Below Hwy 20, each person must have a PFD readily accessible in any floating craft, including tubes and floats. PFDs must be worn by anyone under the age of 10 years at all times on any stretch of the river.

Wear suitable clothing. In summer, lightweight, quick-drying clothes are recommended. In cold weather, wool and wool-blends are recommended. Avoid denim and cotton, as these provide no insulation to the body. Always wear proper footgear. Flip-flops and similar footwear are discouraged. Be prepared for all types of weather; bring a rain jacket, hat, sunscreen, water, and high-energy snacks.

Watch for possible hazards, such as fallen trees, strong currents, slippery rocks, and logs. Unseen submerged rocks, logs, and debris can be hidden in the sometimes murky water.

Glass containers are not permitted on the Chattahoochee River from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek. Styrofoam products are not recommended and are bad for the environment. Always pack out your litter.



Fish Consumption

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Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

1978 Island Ford Parkway

Sandy Springs, GA 30350

http://www.nps.gov/chat

770-952-0370 emergency dispatch

678-538-1200

770-399-8087 fax

Bacteria in the Chattahoochee River does not affect the quality of fish for consumption. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) periodically tests fish from the river

and has found the quality of fish for eating to be very good. While many have no consumption restrictions, DNR

has issued guidelines for eating some fish. To learn more

www.gofishgeorgia.com or call 770-918-6418.

about the guidelines for the Chattahoochee River, and else-

where, consult the Georgia Sport Fishing Regulations. Visit